

USSN.10/674,554
Examiner: KATCHEVES, BASIL S
Group A.U.: 3635

Remarks

It is observed that the Examiner rejected claims 1-4, 6, 7, 9-15, 17-22, 29 and 31 as being anticipated by Rice (US-3,744,200).

Claims 5, 16, 23-28 and 30 were instead rejected as being unpatentable by Rice in view of Bonasso.

Accordingly, the applicant has amended claim 1, although it is believed not being strictly necessary.

In fact, the first connection means of Rice, indicated by 28 are completely different from the first connection means of the applicant's invention.

The first connection means of the present invention are said to provide a coupling at least of the hinge type between each one of the two end regions of the beam and the corresponding pillar.

This means that the first connection means are not fixed in a completely fixed manner to the pillar, but, instead, that between the first connection means and the pillar a certain movement is allowed. The "hinge type connection" means just that the first connection means, as clearly illustrated in the drawing figures, may give rise to slight movements of the beam with respect to the pillar.

In addition, this hinge type coupling provides for a distribution of forces that occurs inside the pillar, with the first connection means that act as a support for the beam.

Still further, the second connection means of the applicant's claimed invention pass through the pillar so as to provide a better anchoring of the beam to the pillar.

Contrary to the above, Rice discloses first connection means that are stably and fixedly connected to the pillar since they comprise a plate that is bolted to the pillar.

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Thus, no hinge type coupling is provided and the distribution of the forces occurs along the outer surface of the pillar and not inside the pillar as in the applicant's invention.

In addition, the second connection means do not pass through the pillar, being only accommodated inside the beam, in line with the beam.

This arrangement also has drawbacks with respect to the applicant's claimed invention, as claimed in amended claim 1, since the second connection means have to be accommodated inside the beam before the first connection means are connected to the beam.

Contrary to the applicant's invention, the first connection means have to be first connected to beam (with the second connection means that have to be inserted in the beam first) and then the beam with the first connection means can be coupled to the pillar, by means of the bolt that are used to connect the plate to the pillar.

The amended claim now recites, in addition to the originally claimed features, that "said second connection means being independently and separately connectable with respect to said first connection mean".

The amended claim 1 is thus believed to be both new and unobvious with regard to the cited prior art documents and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

It should also be observed that the applicant has also amended claims 18, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 30, in order to overcome the Examiner's rejections under 35 U.S.C. 112.

It will be noted that a sincere effort has been made to positively respond to all of the points raised by the Examiner.

While it is believed that the amended claims properly define the present